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HORACE, EPODES 2.33-34

In Epode 2, Horace sets forth the banker's dream of the delights of country life. Part of the dream has to do with the pleasures of winter-time (29-36):

At cum tonantis annus hibernus Iovis
imbris nivisque comparat,
aut trudit acris hinc et hinc multa cane
apros in obstantis plagas,
aut amite levi rara tendit retia,
turdus edacibus dolos,
pavidumque leporem et advenam laqueo gruem
iucunda captat praemia.

The meaning of *amite levi*, 33, has been much discussed, but not by recent editors of Horace. Their comments on the phrase (except those of C. L. Smith) are of little help. G. E. Marindin, in W. Smith, Dictionary of Antiquities³ (1890), s. v. *rete*, I, apparently did not think of clap-nets or spring-nets, for he wrote thus:

In fowling the use of nets was one among many methods . . . ; thrushes were caught in them (Hor. *Epod.* ii. 33, 34); . . . The ancient Egyptians, as we learn from the paintings in their tombs, caught birds in clap-nets. . . .

Apparently Mr. Marindin saw a contrast between Greco-Roman and Egyptian practices.

But, in the article *auceps*, Smith himself had said: . . . The fowlers used for catching birds . . . clap-nets, held by two parallel rods or poles (*amites*, Pallad. x. 12; Hor. *Epod.* ii. 33; *amites*, *periticae aucupales*, Fest. p. 21, Müller), in connection with which decoy- (*illex*) or call-birds, especially the owl (*noctua*) were used (Pallad. l. c.; Plaut. *As.* 1.3.67)

Rich, Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities⁵ (1884), s. v. *amites*, had argued very strenuously that the Greeks and the Romans knew the use of clap-nets. In support of this view he cited especially Plautus, *As.* 1. 3, 61-72 = 215-226, and Manilius, *Astronomica* 5. 371-373.

In *Asinaria* 215-226 Cleareta, *lena*, is explaining to Argyrippus, *adulescens*, rich in love for Cleareta's daughter, but in naught else rich save in the implications of his name, how *lenae* conduct their business:

Non tu scis? hic noster quaestus aucupi simillimus.
Auceps quando concinnavit aream, offundit cibum;
adsuescunt; necesse est facere sumptum qui quaerit
lucrum;
saepe edunt; semel si sunt captae, rem solvunt aucupi.
Itidem hic apud nos: aedes nobis area est, auceps sum
ego,
esca est meretrix, lectus inlex est, amatores aves;
bene salutando consuescunt, compellendo blanditer,
osculando, oratione vinnula, venustula.
Si papillam pertractavit, haud est ab re <d> aucupis;
savium si sumpsit, sumere eum licet sine retibus.
Haecine te esse oblitum in ludo qui fuisti tam diu.

Now, *adsuescunt* . . . *saepe edunt*, 218-219, is a sort of glorified *saepe sumunt*, modifying *offundit cibum*. The sense is, 'He throws food <in the path of the birds he wants to snare>, over and over, till he makes them used to the place where the net is spread: this he does because to make money one must spend some'. *adsuescunt* is thus a good example of what, in my note on *telo*, Aeneid 1.99, I called the use of a word which denotes the result, rather than of a word which would set forth the process (see further the Index to my Vergil, under "Result, emphasis laid on, rather than on process", p. 575). So 222-223 mean, 'So we *lenae*, by polite salutations, smooth addresses, through kisses, through wheedling, through gracious language get the lovers used to our snares, our nets, our cages'. Plautus, then, wrote *adsuescunt* (sc. *aves se areae*), instead of a more natural form, *adsuefacimus aves areae*. He did this, because he wanted to keep *aves* as subject, exactly as he wanted to have the *amatores* as subject in 222. This is, I think, a far better way of taking the passage than the view set forth by Mr. J. H. Gray, in his edition of the *Asinaria* (Cambridge University Press, 1894), that in 217 *lenones*, in 222 *aucupes* is subject, that in the former line *aves*, in the latter *amatores* is object. In this view there is an utter lack of symmetry. By the way, Mr. Gray says not a word as to how the *retia* were used.

The expressions *aream*, *offundit cibum*, *esca*, *retibus* all seem to point, with a fair degree of clearness, to clap-nets.

Manilius 5.371-373, dealing with various ways of catching birds, says:

aut nido captare suo, ramove sedentem,
pascentemve super surgentia lina.

In May, 1904, on a drive from Amalfi to Sorrento, I saw an arrangement of tall poles, with cords or ropes strung from them. My guide explained that on these poles nets were stretched, and that, with the aid of decoy birds, thousands of quail were caught in these nets.

In his review of E. W. Martin, *The Birds of the Latin Poets*, in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 10. 143-144, Professor McDaniel refers to the vast number of birds, especially birds on their migrations (compare Horace's words, *advenam* . . . *gruem*, 33), the Italians to-day kill by *shooting*. He says nothing of the use of nets.

To my colleague, Miss Grace H. Goodale, I am indebted for a most interesting *American* parallel to our Latin passages.

In a magazine entitled *The Companion for All the Family*, in the issue of January 13, 1921, there was an article entitled *When Grandmother Watched the*

Pigeon Net, by C. H. Stephens. It forms an excellent commentary on verses 33-34 of Horace's description.

The author begins by saying that, in the State of Maine, in 1825, or thereabouts,

Out of a calm September sky, which they darkened by their numbers, the enormous flocks of hungry birds <pigeons> descended upon the settlers' fields of corn, wheat, oats, barley, and devoured every kernel.

No small part of the farmers' annual task in those days was to guard these crops from the pigeons, whom the author characterized as

Worse than the gipsy or the brown-tailed moth, worse than the potato beetle, and worse and suddenly more destructive than any other known pest. . . .

By the close of the Civil War, however, wild pigeons had wholly disappeared from Maine.

But up in the farmhouse attic the old squire's pigeon net still hung from two stout pegs in the rafters. It was made of strong twine, tied in two-inch meshes, and if I remember right was thirty feet in length by twenty in width. When set in a grain field, one side was pegged down to the ground, and a long, light pole was tied to the other—the side to be flung forward over the pigeons. The springs that flung it were two slim, but elastic, hornbeam poles about nine feet in length, which were planted firmly in the earth, so that the top ends could be bent backward to rest on the ground and be held down by a hook and trigger. To the latter lines were attached, extending off to a place of concealment—sometimes a hedge fence, often a little hut of boughs—where the trapper lay in wait.

To lay the snare the spring poles had only to be bent down, the nets folded back, and the hooks and triggers set. The long front pole projected about two feet on each side of the net, and when the net was folded back those two projecting ends were laid across the spring poles, so that when the watcher released them the front of the net was flung forward and fell clear of the poles.

A handful of corn or a pint of barley sufficed for bait, and was generally mixed with a quantity of chaff to form what was called the bed.

Usually the flights of pigeons came early in the morning, a little before sunrise. The settler stole out at dawn, set his net and concealed himself, with spring lines in hand. Often he had to wait only a few minutes. With a vast flutter of wings and a wonderful cooing, a flock would swish down on the field. Soon one or more birds would see the bait, then others would come with a rush, until the bed was covered with pigeons, all eagerly picking up the grain. In early days the flocks were far from wild or suspicious of danger.

This was the moment for which the trapper waited. A deft pull at the lines and the spring poles rose suddenly, flinging the net far forward over the bed. As it fell it enveloped every bird within compass of its meshes. Ten, twenty, and sometimes, it is said, a hundred pigeons were caught at once.

Then what mad fluttering ensued until the hunter had time to come and wring their necks! It was a good morning's work when a barrel of pigeons was snared at the expense of a few handfuls of grain. Every settler in our home county had his pigeon net. There were several kinds, different from the old squire's, some much larger, which hung suspended over the beds of bait and were so arranged as to be dropped on the pigeons, instead of flung over them by spring poles.

C. K.

THE CLASSICAL ELEMENT IN THE POEMS OF RUDYARD KIPLING¹

These were your judgments—well deserved enough—
By one who daily scorned his Latin Primer.

What is your verdict on the latest stuff
Sent by this rhymers?

These verses, inscribed in a copy of *Echoes*, presented by the author to the Common-Room of the United Services College, may well serve as an introduction to the study of the classical element in the poetry of Rudyard Kipling. From biographical material in various portions of his prose and poetry and from his somewhat flippant and sacrilegious treatment of the "saints" of ancient days (e. g. in "When 'Omer struck 'is bloomin' lyre"), the scorn of the Latin Primer, its successors, and allies, becomes quite apparent. His brief exposure to the Classics at Westward Ho did not steep the poet in classical lore and tradition as a course in the Universities would have done; but his ardent study of literature brought him into contact with the great spiritual sources of English literature, and his scant classical training left, after all, a deeper impress than the casual reader would suppose. His long residence in India and his association with the military and governmental folk there fitted him to become the interpreter of life in the raw and the literary spokesman of Tommy Atkins. One would be led to believe, therefore, that the poet would not owe a very deep debt to classical literature and history. Nevertheless we do find no slight classical influence at work in his poems.

Probably the most obvious evidences of classical influences in any poet are mythological references and allusions. A careful reading of 543 poems written by Kipling has resulted in the discovery of only 76 such references; these are found in only 35 poems. It may be that this paucity of mythological references has led many readers to suppose that his reaction toward the classical languages is negative.

The Olympian gods are fairly well represented. Zeus (Jupiter, Jove) is mentioned six times. Three times his name appears in oaths or exclamations. Thus, in *Pan in Vermont*, stanza 2, we read "He sold us Zeus knows what!". Twice in the dramatic fragment, *Gow's Watch*, we have "by the Horns of the nine-fold cuckolded Jupiter". In *Poseidon's Law*, Poseidon, in warning his votaries against crooked dealings in vows made to him, adds "Let Zeus adjudge your landward kin whose votive meal and salt At easy cheated altars win oblivion for the fault". Here is also a reference to ancient sacrificial ceremonies. Zeus is also mentioned in *Kopra-Brahm*, and Jove is found in *Gallio's Song*.

Apollo is mentioned or referred to five times. In *A Code of Morals* he is named in association with Cupid. Again, in *Pan in Vermont*, stanza 1, we find "Hub-deep

¹This paper was read at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States, held at The Johns Hopkins University, May 1, 1920.